

PROLOGUE — 1963

*Inaugural Address**

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ONE of several definitions of "Prologue" is "an introductory event". This Annual Meeting of the Academy is the introductory event for 1963 and 1964. The New York Academy of Medicine, established in 1847, will continue to fulfill the purposes for which it was founded. It was "... organized for the advancement of the science and art of medicine, the maintenance of a public medical library and the promotion of public health and medical education. . . ."[†]

The governing authority of this venerable, yet youthful institution, is vested in a Council which includes the elected officers, the elected trustees and the chairmen of the six Standing Committees, who have been elected by the members of their respective Committees.

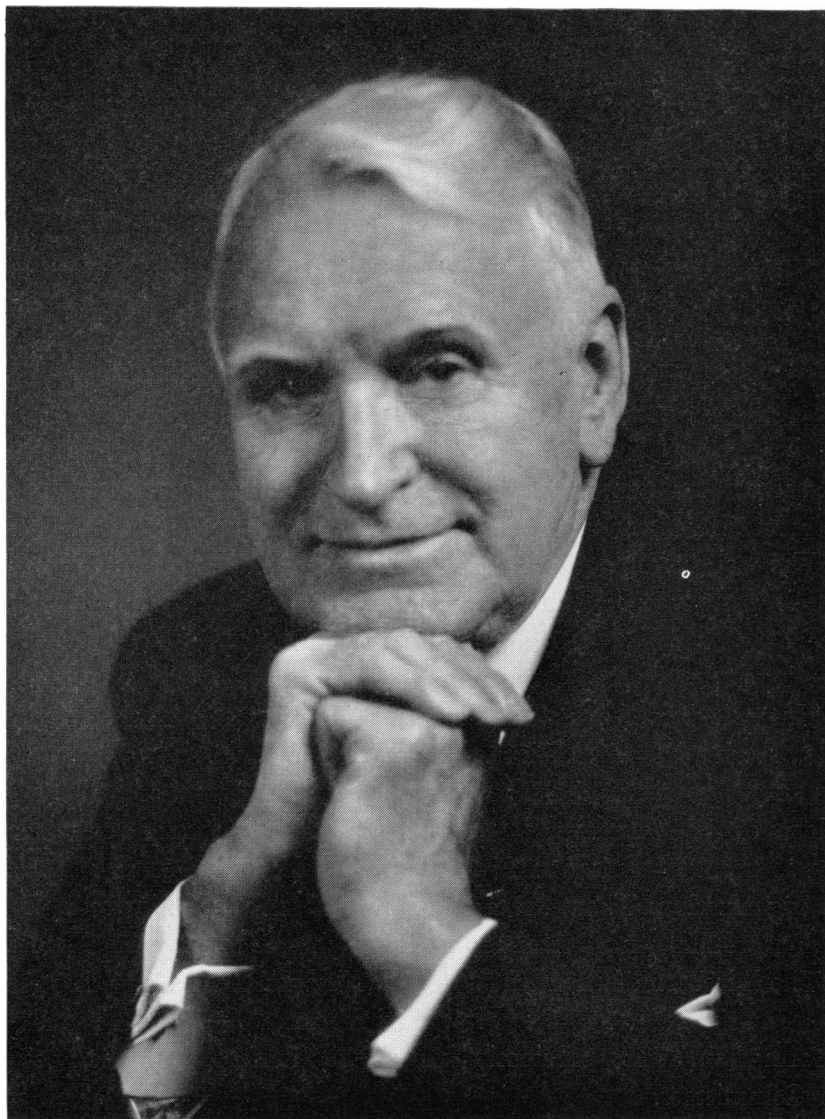
"Integrity" is the word which best describes the character of the Fellows who have guided the affairs of the Academy. These members, together with their predecessors, and other past and present Fellows of the Academy, have established the foundations of the Academy so soundly that our Prologue indicates a successful future for this organization. There are 22 Committees and the officers of the 14 Sections, totaling more than 200 Fellows who are serving the Academy.

The Director of the Academy, Dr. Howard Reid Craig, has established a strong *esprit de corps* in the members of the full-time staff who perform their duties, efficiently yet without fanfare, with their respective Committees.

I shall outline briefly some of the recent activities and continuing projects of the major standing Committees and departments of the Academy.

* Given at the *Annual Meeting* of The New York Academy of Medicine, January 3, 1963.

† Excerpt from Article I of the Constitution of The New York Academy of Medicine.



HAROLD BROWN KEYES, M.D.

Committee on Admission

Under the by-laws of the Academy this is the senior Standing Committee of this organization. Over the years, the Fellows who have served quietly but effectively on this Committee, the membership of which changes by one-third each year, have given generously of their time, energy and considered judgement and they have well earned the gratitude of the entire Fellowship.

During 1962, the Committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. Wilbur Hurlbut, has carried on in the best tradition. Having attended a meeting of the Committee, whose deliberations are entirely confidential, I am impressed by the amount of time given and with the care with which each individual candidate is considered.

The Library

We are all aware that the Library has long been the second medical library in size in the United States. Today, with the proliferation of the literature, the emphasis on scientific research, the enormously increased costs which the future will bring, we cannot but wonder, can the Academy continue to support a library for the medical community on such a scale? One helpful suggestion has been made by Ralph Esterquest, Librarian of Harvard Medical School, in a study entitled, "Proposals for Strengthening Medical Library Resources in New York State," that the Academy Library serve as the reservoir library for the area on a contractual basis, with some funds supplied to support it. The Library looks to the future with confidence, however, hoping to be able to make use of the new machines which offer expensive but effective means of controlling the literature and seeking through cooperative efforts to maintain its leadership in providing the medical literature of the past and present. The Library looks to the past as well, and has inaugurated a new series of classics in the history of medicine in paperback at modest prices. The authors represented in the first group, published in 1962, are Charcot, Corvisart, Heberden, Laennec, Pinel and Rush.

The Librarian, Gertrude L. Annan, has expressed concern that every visitor to the Library should be received in a spirit which encourages the visitor to return. The Library Committee, under its Chairman, Dr. Bronson S. Ray, heartily approves this policy.

Committee on Public Health

The Committee on Public Health, with Dr. Milton Goodfriend as Chairman and Dr. H. D. Kruse as Executive Secretary, continues to study and to issue reports with recommendations on a great variety of problems in the broad field of public health and related areas. A few of the more important matters recently under consideration will be briefly mentioned.

From a study of pharmaceutical advertising several years ago, the Committee became convinced that the crucial step in the process of introducing a new drug is its clinical evaluation. The Committee therefore began to look into the present state of this important activity and produced a report entitled "The Importance of Clinical Testing in Determining the Efficacy and Safety of Drugs", which was published in the *Bulletin* of June 1962. Among other recommendations, this report urged greater emphasis on the qualifications and competence of clinical investigators and offered suggestions for supervision and control. It also suggested special training for these investigators and appealed to qualified clinicians to undertake the work. Furthermore, it outlined desirable qualifications for the medical directors of pharmaceutical firms, pointing out that these men should have training and experience in clinical testing and that they should have status and authority such as they do not now have in some companies.

In August 1962 the Food and Drug Administration, stimulated by the discovery of disastrous birth defects in infants whose mothers had taken thalidomide, proposed stringent new regulations for the testing of new drugs, some of which were along the lines of the Committee's recommendations. The Committee examined the text of the proposed regulations and made several comments and recommendations. Shortly afterward, Congress enacted a series of amendments to the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Law, tightening its provisions governing the marketing of new drugs. These the Committee also reviewed and sent comment on them to the Commissioner of Food and Drugs. Recently, the final form of the regulations has also been reviewed, and the Committee is continuing its interest into 1963 in anticipation of developments as the new measures go into effect.

In the area of medical assistance to the needy aged, the Committee issued a report on the Metcalf-McCloskey law, enacted by the

New York State Legislature in 1961 to set up an assistance program in New York in accordance with the Kerr-Mills law just passed by Congress to make Federal funds available to the states for this purpose.

In the report it was stated that "the Academy is of the opinion that all programs providing direct medical service or hospitalization—except those for psychiatric disorders—and granting approval of hospitals should be incorporated into an independent unit" which would be removed from the jurisdiction of the State Department of Social Welfare. "The Academy would emphasize that in the administration of a program of medical care for the needy aged, authority and responsibility should not be separated. It should be organized as an internally autonomous unit completely directed and controlled by physicians; it is most important that it have standards and regulations; and it is equally essential that its operations be supervised. The Academy is of the opinion that the Department of Social Welfare is not qualified to administer a program of medical care for the needy elderly in accord with these specifications."

A report entitled *Medicine and the Law* dealt with three areas of the greatest importance. These included: 1) licensure and other forms of legal recognition in the healing arts, 2) laws regarding the disposition of the bodies of deceased persons; and 3) the increasingly grave problem of malpractice suits. For ten years the Academy has been pointing out the critical need for a survey of the chaotic state of the laws governing licensure of practitioners in the healing arts and urging the enactment of remedial legislation.

The Committee has also brought to attention the ambiguous, contradictory laws and regulations regarding the disposition of the bodies of deceased persons. Present conditions not only make it more difficult for schools of medicine to obtain bodies for anatomical dissection and research but often also place the autopsy pathologist in double jeopardy of either a civil action or possibly the loss of his license as a physician for "unprofessional conduct".

Among several factors responsible for increased actions at law involving physicians has been the more frequent application, in some states, of the legal principal *res ipsa loquitur* in civil suits for malpractice. And this has resulted directly in the soaring costs of malpractice insurance. To avoid the time-limiting effect of the statute of limitations of two years in New York State for malpractice actions in torts,

some plaintiffs are bringing suits against physicians for breach of contract, or failure of "implied warranty", for which the statutory limitation is six years.

The Academy has recommended that the New York State Legislature initiate a survey of all the laws pertaining to the practice of the healing arts preparatory to clarification and codification. So critical is the situation becoming that immediate action is urgently needed.

A particularly influential accomplishment of the Committee was its study of blood-handling activities in New York City several years ago. As a result of the Committee's recommendations, a strong community organization is now at work setting up a community blood center through which it is believed that a chaotic situation will eventually be clarified.

Committee on Medical Education

The Committee on Medical Education, Dr. James E. McCormack, Chairman, and Dr. Aims C. McGuinness, Executive Secretary, has been engaged in three important projects, all in progress and continuing.

With the discontinuation of the Postgraduate Week after 1961, a special effort has been made to strengthen the Sections, many of which have had an excellent year. The excellent starts of our new Sections on Anesthesiology and Resuscitation, and on Occupational Medicine have been noteworthy. Of special interest was the inauguration of the Valentine Medal and Award of the Section on Urology.

With the support of a grant from the Health Research Council, the Office of Medical Education has instituted the publication of a monthly *Calendar of Seminars in the Basic Medical Sciences*. Four issues have now been published and the publication appears to be well received.

On January 8th, five days following this Annual Meeting, the Academy's Correlated Clinical Science Course will be transferred from Hosack Hall to Station WNYC-TV (UHF Channel 31). If the ensuing 16 weekly video seminars in this trial program are well received, it is anticipated the broadcasts will be resumed on a regular basis next Fall. This will be the first program of continuation medical education to be broadcast on open circuit ultra high frequency (UHF) television in a major metropolitan area.

The Committee also reminds us that the Fellows of the Academy constitute a learned society. Membership confers honor and distinction on the members. In turn, these honors impose certain obligations on the Fellows. Experts on every subject in medicine and related areas come to lecture at the Academy. Apparently, the Fellows are often too preoccupied with other interests or problems to attend these scholarly meetings. Recently, the Council of the Academy appointed a committee, with Dr. Jarvis Coffin as Chairman, to study this problem and to recommend action. The sense of the Committee was that, in return for the honor of being elected a Fellow of the Academy, each member should feel obligated to attend at least a certain minimum number of Stated Meetings per year. In many similar societies and academies, this requirement is spelled out in the by-laws of the society.

Committee on Special Studies

We wish to commend Dr. Norton S. Brown for the extraordinary retary of the Committee on Special Studies.

We wish to commend Dr. Norton S. Brown for the extraordinary amount of time and effort he has given to the Committee this year. He handled the Committee's work during the *interregnum* period created by the retirement of Dr. Iago Galdston as Executive Secretary, and the appointment of Mr. Becker.

With Dr. Brown and Dr. Edward Tolstoi as officers of this Committee, 1962 was a productive year. We are proud of the Committee's work over this past year in the planning and follow-through of such activities as the twenty-second annual Eastern States Health Education Conference, and our annual series of Lectures to the Laity, now in their twenty-eighth year. Of equal importance in bringing new knowledge and perspective to our Fellows, and to the community at large, have been such projects as the *Conference on Medicine and Anthropology*, the transactions of which are now in the hands of the printer, and will be published under the title "Man's Image in Medicine and Anthropology." The pilot study on "Whither Medicine", which might more appropriately be designated as "Medicine in Transition" and will also soon be available in printed form, is another such special project which is being completed. These projects contributed greatly to building the Academy's national stature and they will form an important part of the Committee's future activities.

Bulletin

The *Bulletin* is the official journal of the Academy. Dr. Charles E. Kossmann is Chairman of the Editorial Board and Dr. Robert L. Craig is the editor. The latter is also Executive Secretary of the Committee on Publications and Medical Information, of which Dr. Locke L. Mackenzie is Chairman. This latter Committee is responsible for the publication of the monthly *Grey Folder* of Academy programs and of the newest project, *News and Notes*. The purposes of this new publication are to inform the Fellowship of the numerous and varied activities of the Council and Trustees, and of the many Academy Committees, and "to report various items of interest concerning the Fellows themselves".

The *Bulletin* publishes only material which has been presented at the Academy and it would seem reasonable and proper that the *Bulletin* should have priority of publication rights of these presentations. This priority has never been insisted upon but the editor reminds us that, to maintain high standards, he would be pleased to receive for consideration the manuscripts of all papers given at Academy meetings.

The Bureau of Medical Information continues to supply authentic information on a variety of medical matters to both the lay and professional public. These numerous requests are received by mail, by phone and in person, from newspaper reporters, science writers, script writers for radio and television, other writers for lay magazines and of books, and from the medically perplexed general lay public.

The Business Office

The Business Manager of the Academy, Mr. Robert M. Brereton, reports that during the past year, 1962, the Academy operated within its expense budget which amounted to \$875,805. Forty-two per cent of this amount, \$370,500, was allocated to the Library.

Over the next two years, Mr. Brereton also plans to present to the Trustees for their approval the completion of ten projects, some of which have already been partially accomplished. These projects have largely to do with maintenance of the physical integrity of the Academy Building, both the exterior walls and roof, and the repair and improvement of interior facilities. The latter includes completion of

recovering the seats in Hosack Hall, improvement of the lighting in certain areas of the Library, conversion and improvement of sanitary facilities and replacement of the paging system.

With a solid nucleus of Fellows working continuously on various committees for the welfare of the Academy, and more available when requested to serve, and with the loyal support of the entire Fellowship, we are confident that the accomplishments of the future will be equally worth-while and satisfying.

Under the authority of the Council and the guidance of the Director, Dr. Craig, assisted by his executive associates, we may look forward to additional successful years in even wider horizons than our founders envisioned.